

Well liked and respected at Commissioners Court, Smith was revered by many of his employees, from whom he insisted on unwavering courtesy to the public. A number of Smith's employees have been with him for decades. It was frequently said that when Smith finally left office, the average age of tax office employees likely would decline significantly.

Smith, a native of Lindale, Texas, took a law degree from Houston Law School before a great many of his Harris County constituency were born. Talk around the county was that Smith, one of the Harris County's last remaining Democrats elected countywide and serving his 12th term, was clinging to the office to keep it out of Republican hands. But there is no denying he managed an efficient shop.

Through the years, Smith fought off usurpers to his domain of tax collection and tax bill distribution, voter registration, motor vehicle registration, alcohol license fees and other state levies. Smith fended off a proposal by powerful former Mayor Bob Lanier to give a portion of his office's tax collection function to a law firm. And in his most recent re-election, Smith put down a challenger's campaign to shutter the tax office, pass voter registration duties to the county clerk and privatize tax collection.

Smith, in 1952, was the first county official to promote a black employee to an important government position, a deputy clerkship. And he wrote the statewide property tax exemption for citizens over 65 that was later adopted as a constitutional amendment.

Smith's wife of 59 years, Dorothy DeArman Smith, died in 1991. They were parents of two daughters, Nancy Stewart and Pam Robinson, both of Houston.

His mind clear, his wit sharp and his sense of humor intact, Smith's heart failed him in the end. He died at 89 at St. Luke's Hospital, where he was being treated for heart problems. Carl Smith will be long missed and remembered always.

INTRODUCTION OF THE STAND DOWN AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1998

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 1998

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Stand Down Authorization Act of 1998. This important legislation will build up and expand the VA's role in providing outreach assistance to homeless veterans.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), more than 275,000 veterans are without homes every night and twice as many may be homeless during the course of the year. Based on this statistic, one out of every three individuals who is sleeping in a doorway, alley or box in our cities and rural communities has put on a uniform and served our country. Unfortunately, these numbers are only expected to increase as the military downsizes.

In times of war, exhausted combat units requiring time to rest and recover were removed from the battlefield to a place of safety. This procedure was known as "Stand Down." Today, Stand Downs which help veterans are held across our nation. Stand Downs are grassroots, community-based intervention programs designed to help the estimated 275,000 veterans without homes in our country. To-

day's battlefield is too often life on the streets for our nation's veterans.

The Stand Down Authorization Act of 1998 will direct the VA to create a pilot program that would establish Stand Down programs in every state. Currently, only 100 Stand Down events take place in a handful of states annually. In addition, my legislation would also authorize the VA to distribute excess supplies and equipment to Stand Downs across the nation.

The first such special Stand Down, held in 1988, was the creation of several Vietnam veterans. The goal of the event was to provide one to three days of hope designed to serve and empower homeless veterans. Since, the, Stand Downs have provided a means for thousands of homeless or near-homeless veterans to obtain a broad range of necessities and services including food, clothing, medical care, legal assistance, mental health assessment, job counseling and housing referrals. Most importantly, Stand Downs provide a gathering that offers companionship, camaraderie and mutual support.

Thousands of volunteers and organizations over the past decade have done an outstanding job donating their time, expertise and energy to address the unique needs of homeless or near-homeless veterans and their families. Currently, the VA coordinates with local veteran service organizations, the National Guard and Reserve Units, homeless shelter programs, health care providers and other members of the community in organizing the Stand Down events annually. However, much more action is needed to address the persistent and growing number of homeless veterans who have fought honorably to preserve our freedom and now face personal crisis in their lives.

Veterans in past service unconditionally stood up for America. Now we must speak up and stand up for veterans today. I urge all members to join with me in providing outreach assistance to veterans without homes by co-sponsoring the Stand Down Authorization Act of 1998.

CLEVELAND HOPKINS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 1998

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a very important issue in my district, Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.

Just yesterday, the United States House of Representatives passed the Transportation Appropriations bill, an important piece of legislation for this country. The Honorable Chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Committee, Mr. WOLF, has crafted a bipartisan piece of legislation that will serve this country's transportation needs for the coming fiscal year.

Accompanying this bill is the House Committee Report (105-648). I would like to clarify something in the RECORD that is contained in this report as it relates to Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.

Cleveland Hopkins is vitally important to Northeast Ohio. It not only connects Northeast Ohio with the rest of the world, it provides jobs

and economic opportunity for the people who live there. Cleveland Hopkins is also within the city limits, and is surrounded by residential communities that are being asked to adjust to the growing demands being placed on the airport.

Because the airport is very close to reaching overcapacity, the city of Cleveland has embarked upon a plan to expand the capacity of the airport and to improve it so that it may meet the needs of the 21st century. Improving the airport and expanding its capacity in the least intrusive manner to surrounding communities is something that I wholeheartedly support.

However, there is language in the Transportation Appropriations Committee Report that needs to be clarified. The language states on page 78, "The Committee urges the FAA administrator to give priority consideration to a request for discretionary funding for site and engineering studies for the proposed runway expansion at the Cleveland Hopkins International Airport."

The case to expand a specific runway has not yet been made, and singling out this one aspect of the proposed expansion could be misleading. Expanding the capacity of the airport to handle increased air traffic would not necessarily be advanced by merely lengthening one runway.

It is my understanding that it was not the intention of the Committee to determine particular airport improvements. The Committee wishes to urge the FAA to give priority to necessary studies of airport improvements at Cleveland Hopkins. Such studies might include a wide range of possible projects. All legitimate proposals for expanding the airport deserve equal consideration, as well as scrutiny by the FAA, air traffic controllers, local officials from the affected communities, residents, and my Congressional office.

To this end, I intend to work with the House-Senate Transportation Appropriation Conference Committee to clarify that the House Committee did not mean to specify a runway expansion, but to instruct the FAA to make Cleveland Hopkins airport improvements generally a priority for engineering and site studies.

Thank you Mr. Speaker for giving me this opportunity to clarify the Committee's intention for the RECORD.

HONORING ADMIRAL ROBERT E. KRAHEK

HON. BOB CLEMENT

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 1998

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Admiral Robert E. Kramek, Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, for his devoted service to the U.S. Coast Guard and his commitment to our country.

Admiral Kramek began his long road to become the 20th Commandant of the United States Coast Guard when he graduated with honors from the USCG Academy with a B.S. in Engineering in 1961. He attended post